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24 April 1956

Review of CIA/RR-G-14, The East-West German Border: The Westernmost Segment of the Iron Curtain

1. Although I have not been able to read every word of the report, I spent considerable time sampling the various sections and am convinced that a great deal of work has gone into the compilation and analysis of data for this report.

2. Not having the benefit of maps, which undoubtedly will be included in the final report, I get somewhat concerned lest we are missing our unique opportunity for the use of maps in relation to geographic textual material. As I was reading certain pages of the report, I wondered whether or not a map printing in a lighter color, underlaying the text and pertaining in substance to the text, would not be a convenient way of combining map and text together so that the reader could concentrate on one or the other as he saw fit. This method, if it were at all practicable, could be adopted very easily and perhaps the maps prepared would be much simplified over those which would appear as separates. Another possibility would be the preparation of map inserts for those pages of text which carry long, burdensome, but essential, geographical locational data. I do not necessarily believe that a map can be a complete substitute for textual descriptions of the kind included in the report, but I do believe it could go a long way toward giving to the reader a graphic foundation for the understanding of place relationships; this can be done on the same page with the text.

3. Another suggestion concerning maps occurred to me as I was reading the textual description, and it is given here for your further consideration. A map of the border area could be prepared in some detail and segmented, with textual description of main characteristics of the segments included on the map itself. The combination of graphic representation of place relationships with the textual descriptions of characteristics would seem to me to enhance the reader's understanding of the placement of those characteristics within the region or zone as a whole.

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4. The report is well done, and certainly in sufficient detail for most conceivable uses which could be made of it. You, your branch, and the author are to be complimented on the type of research standards which are represented by this particular piece of work.

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